

REMARKS

Reexamination and reconsideration of claims 1-7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, and 17, and consideration of new claims 21-24, are respectfully requested. Claims 10, 13, and 15 are cancelled without prejudice in this Reply and claims 8 and 18-20 were previously cancelled without prejudice.

The disclosure was objected to for informalities. The disclosure has been amended to correct an error as suggested by the Primary Examiner. However, the objection to "figures 6a,6b" does not require correction since the sentence is discussing the transverse slit as shown in figures 6a,6b. Withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure is warranted and respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 9-14, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. sec. 103(a) applying U.S. Pat. 4,264,127 ('127) in view of U.S. Pat. 6,595,697 ('697). Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter that was indicated as allowable by the Primary Examiner. Additionally, claim 17 was amended to clarify the features of the present invention. See Figs. 4a and 4b of the present invention. Moreover, the amendment of claims 17 is not an admission that the art of record discloses, teaches, or otherwise suggests the features of claim 17. For at least these reasons, withdrawal of the sec. 103(a) rejection of claims 1-4, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, and 17 is warranted and respectfully requested.

Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. sec. 103(a) applying prior art figures 1 and 2 of the present application the '697 patent. The prior art figures 1 and 2 teach a fiber array as discussed in the present application at p. 2. On the other hand, the '697 patent teaches a cylindrical ferrule 20 having a chamfer (not numbered) at the free end that forms a conical surface, rather than a planar surface. See Fig. 3A of the '697 patent. The chamfer of ferrule 20 is used for breaking the edge of the

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cylindrical ferrule 20. The skilled artisan would not be motivated to make the purported modification to the prior art figures as suggested. Moreover, claim 17 was amended to clarify the features of the present invention. For at least these reasons, withdrawal of the sec. 103(a) rejection of claim 17 is warranted and respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 9, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. sec. 103(a) applying U.S. Pat. 6,540,411 ('411) in view of the '697 patent. Claim 1 has been amended to recite the allowable subject matter. As for claim 17, it defines over the purported modification. For at least these reasons, withdrawal of the sec. 103(a) rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 9, and 17 is warranted and respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9-11, 13, 14, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. sec. 103(a) applying U.S. Pat. 4,743,084 ('084) in view of the '697 patent. Claim 1 has been amended to recite the allowable subject matter. As for claim 17, it defines over the purported modification. For this reason, withdrawal of the sec. 103(a) rejection of claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14, and 17 is warranted and respectfully requested.

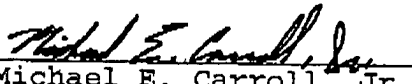
Claims 7 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. sec. 103(a) applying the '127, '411, or '084 patents in view of the '697 patent. Claim 1 has been amended to recite the allowable subject matter. Thus, withdrawal of the sec. 103(a) rejection of claims 7 and 16 is warranted and is respectfully requested.

Two-hundred and eight dollars (\$208.00) is believed due in connection with this Reply for two new independent claims and two new dependent claims. If any other fees are due in connection with this Reply, please charge any fees, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 19-2167.

Allowance of all pending claims is believed to be warranted and is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is welcomed to telephone the undersigned to discuss the merits of this patent application.

Respectfully submitted,


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